

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated May 3, 2005, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections of the claims. The Examiner's detailed comments and suggestions are noted with appreciation.

Claims 1, 2 and 10-18 were objected to for the use of the definite article "the." In response thereto, the claims have been reviewed and revised to remove the appearance of this article, where appropriate.

Claim 17 was rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C § 112, with regard to an issue of claim interpretation. While Applicants respectfully submit that the claim is definite as originally presented, to remove the basis for the rejection, claim 17 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's statement of interpretation.

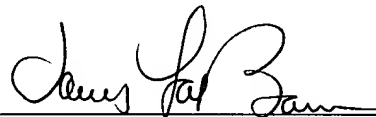
Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103, on the grounds that they were considered to be unpatentable over the Cook et al. patent (U.S. 6,786,655) in view of the Levy et al. patent (U.S. 6,369,873). It is noted that the Cook patent is based upon an application that was filed on February 5, 2001, whereas the present application claims priority from a Japanese application filed on October 2, 2000. To perfect Applicants' claim of priority, a verified translation of the Japanese translation document is being submitted herewith. It is respectfully submitted that Applicants are entitled to a date of invention that is prior to the U.S. filing date of the Cook patent. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection based upon this patent is therefore respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance,
and a notice to that effect is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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